

Blacksburg Transit

BLACKSBURG TRANSIT COMPLETES 20th YEAR OF SERVICE

On April 23rd, 2003 Blacksburg Transit celebrated its 20th anniversary. In recognition of this tremendous milestone, BT would like to thank its many supporter's, partners and riders for what has been an amazing ride. Look at how far we've come, and it is all because of you.

First Year

Fleet size: 8 buses
transit vans
Staff: 26 part time employees
Number of routes: 3
Passengers carried: 95,000

Twentieth Year

Fleet size: 45 buses, 9 Para
Staff: 25 full time, 190 part time
Number of routes: 7
Passengers carried: 1,995,105

BT looks forward to new beginnings as we roll out a new name for our Paratransit operation, , plans for the expansion of our facility, construction of a transfer facility on Virginia Tech campus and additional routes to support the growing needs of the New River Valley.

Over the past twenty years a lot has changed. Blacksburg Transit has evolved from having:

Ridership FY 2003

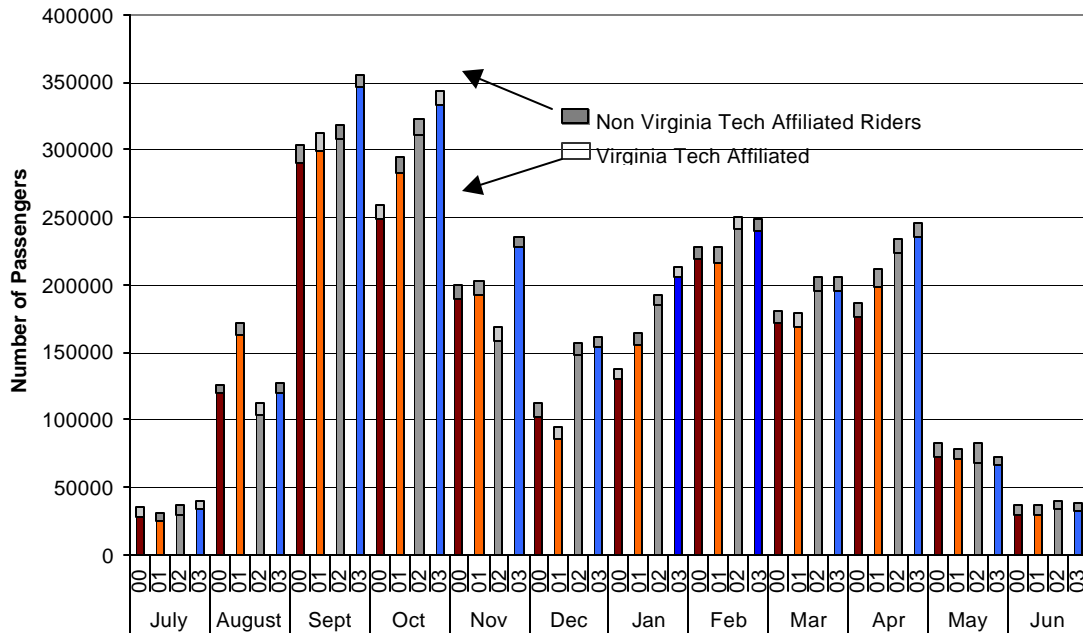
Our ridership has steadily increased over the past four fiscal years. In this chart you will see that Blacksburg Transit has been able to increase ridership and still keep a watchful eye on our costs.

	FY 03 July 1, 2002- June 30, 2003	FY 02 July 1, 2001- June 30, 2002	FY 01 July 1, 2000- June 30, 2001	FY 00 July 1, 1999- June 30, 2000
Passengers	2,291,705 (20.8% increase from FY 00)	1,995,105 (5.2% increase from FY 00)	2,002,648 (5.6% increase from FY 00)	1,895,671
Revenue Hours	68,719.25 (11.8% decrease from FY 00)	65,514.80	75,938.80	77,919.60
Revenue Miles	680,764.00 (6.7% decrease from FY 00)	671,352.00	751,818.70	730,187.10
Cost per Revenue Hour	\$37.36 (8.9% decrease from FY 00)	\$39.75	\$46.57	\$41.04

Important to note: The chart above shows that in FY03 we increased ridership 14.9% from FY 02 and still were able to lower the cost per hour by 6.4%

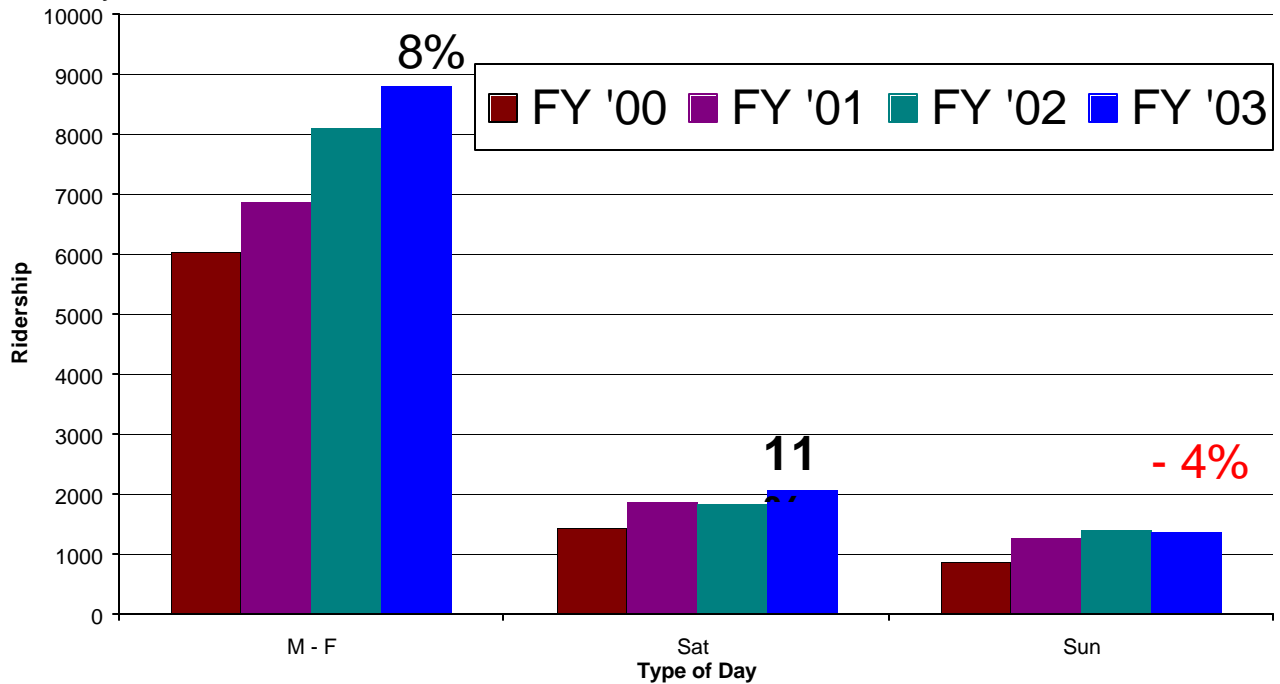
In the graph below, Blacksburg Transit shows that the increase in ridership occurred across the entire 02/03 fiscal year.

Comparison of Monthly Ridership per Fiscal Year



August, December, January, and May ridership may vary due to the Virginia Tech semesters start and end dates.

In the Graph **January - Average Daily Ridership by Type of Day per Fiscal Year** below you can



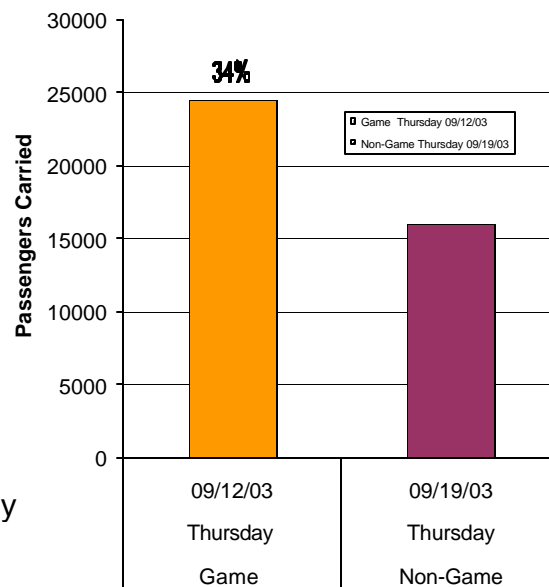
see a steady increase in ridership across the weekdays and Saturdays. The decrease in Sunday ridership in the graph below is a result of only two full service Sundays in January 2003.

Game Day Ridership

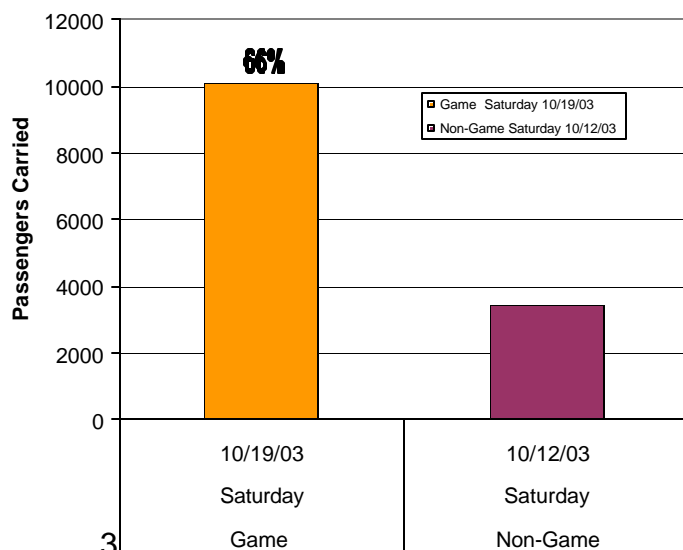
Our game day service has grown over the past year to include shuttle service off-campus parking lots to the VT campus. These lots are at local public schools and the parking fees go to various PTA's of area schools. Blacksburg Transit produced a Gameday newsletter to help offset some of the cost for the shuttles and provide invaluable parking information to VT fans. The following graphs give some indication of the challenges we face on VT game days compared to our regular route service.

On this Thursday night gameday you see that we carried 34% more passenger than on a similar Thursday night, around 10,000 extra riders.

Thursday Game Day VS Non-Game Day
Comparison of Total Daily Ridership



Saturday Game Day VS Non-Game Day
Comparison of Total Daily Ridership



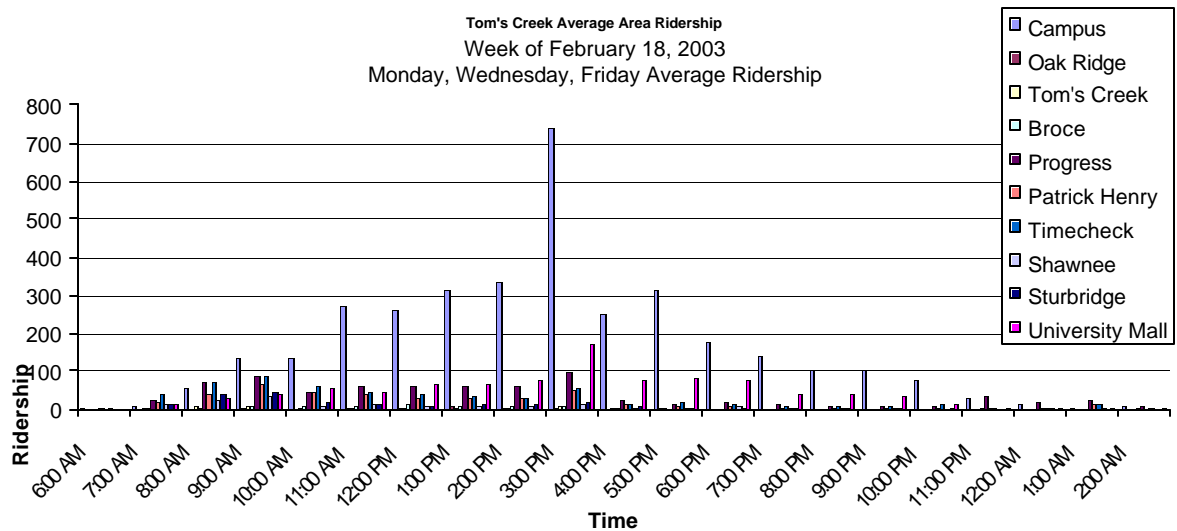
The percentage listed above the 9/12/03 total is the percent difference between the two days.

On this Saturday gameday, we carried 66% more than on a typical Saturday. This means around 3 times as many folks rode to and from the VT football game.

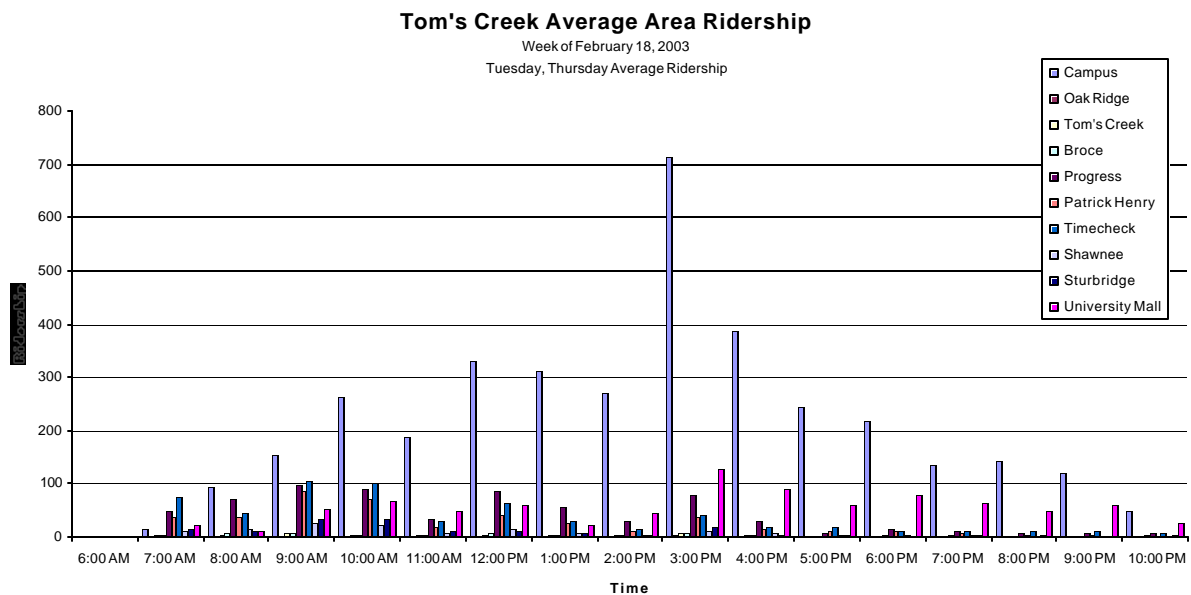
The percentage listed above the 10/19/03 total is the percent difference between the two days

Tom's Creek Ridership

The two Tom's Creek routes we run account for over 50% of our total ridership in any given year. We have centered our data collection efforts on these two routes. The first graph show the average ridership on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday hourly divided into zones. As seen below the majority of pick-ups in the AM are from off-campus and then on-campus pick-ups for return trips in the afternoon. In the second graph we have similar data for Tuesday and Thursday. On both graphs you may note a large spike in the 3:00 pm hour, this is due to trips to the Math Emporium for afternoon classes and the majority of students returning to off-campus housings at this time.



Note: Data includes both Tom's Creek A route and Tom's Creek B route counts.



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The Rules and Regulations

In the 2000 census Blacksburg was designated an urbanized area. This designation has already begun to change how we operate and will produce a multitude of changes over the next decade. Providing public transportation in an urbanized area will involve much more in the way of record keeping and reporting than was formerly required. Blacksburg Transit staff has begun the process of compiling materials for our first review. We are also developing methods to record and report data required for the National Transit Database.

Blacksburg Transit Building Expansion

Blacksburg Transit has completed final preliminary plans for the facility expansion project. The building was originally constructed in anticipation of this type of expansion, and features several elements to simplify the expansion. The plans call for an addition of 2,680 square feet to the existing 8,532 square feet of office space in the administration and operations departments. The office space is needed to accommodate staff for a growing transit and Paratransit operation. There is also the addition of a 5,325 square-foot meeting and training facility. The bus parking and maintenance areas will be expanded by 25,616 square feet. This will add twenty indoor bus parking spaces to the parking area and two bays, including another pit, to the back of the maintenance area. The additional bus parking and maintenance space is needed to accommodate route buses and paratransit vans in current service, as well as expected service expansion to meet local public transportation needs. The facility will encompass a total of 93,872 square feet with the new addition.

Marketing Activities

Throughout the year staff participates in a variety of events including in Off Campus Housing Fairs, VT Open House, Haunted Halloween Bus, VT Homecoming parade, Stuff-A- Bus, Christmas Parade, Senior Focus, RA's Resource Fair, Oak Lane House Manager Orientation and Freshman Orientation.

Employee Advisory Team

The Employee Advisory Team is a small group of operators representing the operator corps who get together regularly with the operations staff to discuss any new ideas, improvements or concerns they may have. They also bring any suggestions from fellow operators to the meeting for discussion.

It gives all levels of operators an opportunity to have a voice in the company and to learn how some things are accomplished within Blacksburg Transit and the Town of Blacksburg. They get a chance to understand how certain processes work when it comes to changing services. Overall, it gives the members a new perspective of the company, while helping the rest of the operators an opportunity to give suggestions as well.

Operations

In an effort to save resources and reduce costs, Blacksburg Transit reviewed and revamped several of its routes. Compared to the FY 2001-2002, these changes saved Blacksburg Transit just over 6,200 operator hours but with these efficiencies were able to increase both revenue miles and hours. The changes for the 2002-2003 year are as follows.

- ☞ The Hokie Express and Oak Lane routes were combined and rerouted to better serve the Virginia Tech Campus. This new route also included an alternate route that ran in the evenings (after 7pm) and all day on the weekends.
- ☞ The North Main and South Main routes were combined into one Main Street route. The Main Street route now not only carries students to and from campus, but it also provides resident's access to the entire commercial stretch of Main Street on one route.
- ☞ Service to far South Main (south of Ellet Road) including Professional Park and Montgomery Regional Hospital was moved and combined with the Ramble Road route. This change not only saved operations one bus, but it also increased frequency to this area.

New Training

Starting this year operation staff has implemented a new training Station, This mirror station, pictured below, is designed to have all operators set-up their mirror the same reducing the potential for accidents as operators move from bus to bus.

BT Access

BT Access has gone through a number of significant changes over the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The biggest change this year was our name change. From the time that our demand response service was first implemented, until April 29, 2003, it was called Blacksburg Transit's Paratransit service. There was a growing desire both internally and externally for a new identity and a new direction for our demand response service. It was deemed that a new name would help to provide that new identity. In the new name, our Paratransit

passengers were looking for respect, gravity, and no denigration from people who had no prior knowledge of the service. The only way we could obtain the best name for our service that reflects the passion, imagination, and feelings of our passengers would be to let them decide. Paratransit operations developed the idea of a contest that all Paratransit passengers and members of the community could enter that would allow them to rename Blacksburg Transit's Paratransit. The new name would be announced on Blacksburg Transit's 20th Birthday Bash on April 29, 2003. This served two purposes: one; it allowed passengers to have a part in making decisions for their system, and two; it received media attention that allowed our service to reach people who had no previous knowledge of it. BT Access received a lot of positive feed back from passengers concerning the contest and the opportunity to be a part of such an important decision. The Access office currently sends out a monthly passenger newsletter. We will send passengers more newsletters and more information in an attempt to include passengers and keep them more in touch with the constant changes in BT Access